FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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OUR PURPOSE: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of Fellowship among mankind.

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UNDER A DUST OF SNOW

Alice Mackenzie Swaim

Rosemary for remembrance,
ivy leaves for faithfulness and loyalty.
Under a dust of snow, an autumn rain,
their leaves are bent and bruised,
but waiting in the frozen winter earth,
the roots endure.

EDITORIAL

OUR WILLINGNESS AND UNWILLINGNESS

IT ISN'T THE TEACHINGS on which we were brought up but our faulty misunderstandings and misinterpretations of them that we are obliged to recover from if we are to get well.

A lifelong fault of mine has been to apply too literally many of the precepts which were handed me as a boy to try to live up to. The great Americsn virtue of self-reliance, for instance, I took to mean that it was desirable to live at a distance from the lives of others, and I practiced this so relentlessly that I ended up reeling in loneliness and in panic at my inability to connect. My practice of this old-fashioned virtue, in other words, turned it into a shortcoming.

I do not believe this was entirely all my own misdoing. The times change. The virtue that Emerson proclaimed and that was surely right and appropriate for the inhabitants of a vast and empty continent became a hundred and some years later a hindrance —a neurosis—to people like myself trying to live in what had become a small-seeming land overcrowded with others and with communications from others without letup. Not that self-reliance is not a virtue still. It is. But there are others more necessary and more useful. For instance: the virtues I have had to teach myself have been openness to others, acceptance of others, love for others. . . .

To teach yourself a few new virtues is a difficult task. If you are like me, you do not attempt so much as a stab at it unless the necessity of it is extreme—unless the lack of such virtues has grown literally painful. Lucky are the ones who suffer pains of the sort, for they, in discovering within themselves a willingness to change, are the ones who find the joy of giving up their unwillingness and the discomfort it was producing.

When I examine the unwillingness that I can still sense within myself and that I know very well I am going to have to rid myself of sooner or later, I can see how it has entrenched itself within me by attaching itself like some super-subtle disease (which is what it really is) to the shortcomings of my nature: in my case, mostly to the ego. When I think of giving up such and such a trait, something unwilling rebels inside of me and exclaims, 'Why, you can't get rid of *that*! That is you! The *real you*!''

There is one hope for me, however. This is the incontrovertible fact that the pangs will eventually grow so bad that I will finally admit to God that, with some help, I would really like to make a change. This seems to be the all-too-human process by which in our strangely unwilling way we learn to be willing. —P.G.

REFUSING TO ARGUE THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Gail White

Why quarrel with friends this winter day?
Better to walk in the snow,
relating the world to the senses:
redbirds that flicker in my wrist,
ice that my brain transforms
to a prism of rainbow colors.
In a world past talking of,
believed beyond conviction,
I walk like the end of time
with the divine about me:
Christ the warmth of the sun,
Buddha the white of the snow.

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS *by Reuben L. Musey*

COLUMBUS DISCOVERS A NEW WORLD— A DRAMATIC MOMENT IN HISTORY

PROLOGUE. . .

In this bicentennial year for the United States of America, many events in a proud panorama of our country's history from a vast wilderness dotted with Indian settlements to a nation of rich farms, thriving industry, broad highways, towns, villages, and crowded cities pass in review. But, the story of discovery, exploration led the way. It began nearly five centuries ago.

Mainstream. . .

The Genoese who found the new world—Christopher Columbus—was a dreamer. But, he had the courage to try to make his dreams come true. His dream was that if one sailed West instead of East he could reach Asia. Columbus thought his plan would be easier to carry out than it really was. Because he planned to sail into unknown seas, Columbus had to guess what he would find, and he guessed wrong. He believed that the earth was round, but he thought it was much smaller than it was.

Columbus was sure it would be easier and cheaper to reach Asia by sailing westward than by sailing all the way around Africa as the Portugese were trying to do. But he was not a rich man. He could not buy ships, pay for supplies for a long voyage, or hire fews to sail the ships. He needed help to carry out his bold plans.

In this date in history, the kings of Europe were eager for greater wealth and had already helped some ship's-captains to make important voyages. So Columbus turned to the monarchs of Spain and Portugal. For years no one would listen to him. Finally he persuaded King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain to give him ships and money to prepare for a westward voyage to Asia.

At last everything was ready and the time to set sail arrived! It was a happy day in the life of the man who had waited years for the opportunity to prove himself.

It was quite early in the morning of Friday, August 3, 1492.

In the harbor of the Spanish village of Palos, the determined Columbus stood in the deck of a small ship, the Santa Maria, giving orders to the crew of thirty-nine men. The ship slowly sailed from the harbor and put out to sea. Two other ships, the Nina, with twenty-six men aboard, and the Pinta, carrying twenty-three, also sailed under his command.

In the three small vessels, eighty-eight men in all, his crewmen—mostly criminals who had been given their choice of imprisonment or of sailing with him on his dangerous voyage—began the epoch of discovery.

From the beginning, he kept a record of each day's progress, recording the events, happenings, and comments. The men grew fearful as day after day the ships moved westward through unknown waters. Columbus restlessly walked the deck, keeping watch on everything—the wind, the sails, the weather, the men, who had become restless as well. It was necessary to keep two sets of records. One, which he kept for himself, gave the true distance they had come from Spain. The other, which he let the crew see, showed the distances as less than they really were. He did this so that the men would not get alarmed at penetrating so far into the unknown.

But, at last, ten weeks after the little port of Palos had dropped from sight behind them, they saw sure signs of land. It was on the morning of October 12 that they reached an island named San Salvador in the Bahamas. Columbus hastened ashore to look for gold and spices of the East.

Excerpts from his diary record: "Wednesday, 10th of October—the course W.S.W., men could endure no longer. . . . mutiny quelled. . . . Thursday, 11th of October—a rougher sea than had been during the whole of the voyage. Crew saw sandpipers, green reed near Santa Maria. . . . Friday 12th of October—the vessels hove to, waiting for daylight. Land sighted. Presently saw naked people. The Admiral (Columbus) went on shore. . . ."

In retrospect, a little history of Columbus himself tells us he was born in Genoa, Italy. Historians set the date as April 5, 1451. He was the son of a weaver and at an early age followed this trade. But at the age of fourteen he was sailing before the mast. At the age of twenty-six, he married the daughter of a Por-

tugese navigator. Life up to the moment of his journey was one of hardship, disappointments, disbeliefs, with moments of ridicule.

But none of these discouraged him as he embarked on the Sea of Darkness and in spite of mutiny threatened by his crew continued his westward voyage.

Epilogue. . .

A twentieth-century poet, Joaquin Miller, wrote a poem:

Before him, not the ghost of shores:
Before him, only shoreless seas.
But, he said, 'Sail on! Sail on!'
He gained a world. . . America. . . .

Today, this bicentennial year, we honor the noble deed of Christopher Columbus, who discovered a new world, a dramatic moment in American history, who, though clouded with disappointment because he failed to find the route he planned, never knew that he made the most memorable voyage of all.

BICENTENNIAL PRAYER *by Dennis Barry Carroll*

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, we pause this bicentennial year to show in retrospect our thanks.

Your guiding hand brought Christopher Columbus to a new world—now inhabited by people from the far corners of the globe.

Continue to guide this nation—a nation of purpose, a nation of strength, a nation of ancestry.

ALL THINGS WORK FOR GOOD. . .

Cornelia Bagarotti

FAR TOO OFTEN life is filled with fear, rebellion, regret, or remorse. At such times we tend to oppose destiny and to question the positive wisdom of our fate. Imagining, as it were, that our desires and wishes which have been disappointed or frustrated are indeed catastrophes. How natural a reaction. Yet what a lack of faith and belief in the purpose of life itself. Is Man here only for pleasure? Or is Man here as well to learn, to grow, to mature and become an expression of the Divine Spirit in his body which is the Temple of God?

When fall comes and one by one the trees grow bare, the days shorter, the air colder until finally the snow drifts silently over the hills and all is embraced with a blanket of white, could any child imagine that in a few months' time new leaves would form, flowers bloom, and the skies be balmy and blue and filled with the songs of birds? That the little brooks would glisten joyously, butterflies and bees go from flower to flower, and earth rejoice in the beauty of life once more?

Or as we pass by and see bulldozers at work or wrecking cranes or the rubble and disorder of construction, could a child conceive what the architect and builder has planned and what will one day stand in that now-devastated area? No; only experience and time and faith allow Man to know seeming destruction is only preparation for greater good.

In Romans 8:28 it is written: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called together according to his purpose."

As in nature or construction-work so in private life many are the things which temporarily test, limit, or sadden us. Yet, given time, we later look back and review these same events with another vision and see how through them we were made to deepen, to grow in patience, love, and wisdom. How capacities of endurance or strength were born, how new capacities and direction and even gifts or careers were forced into our lives by the Divine wisdom within these very events.

Those who truly have faith can abide in the guiding hand of God leading them gently into better paths than those they had heretofore chosen. Peacefully and prayerfully they can confide into His keeping their destiny, knowing that "all things work together for the good of those who love God."

THE WORMLESS TRUTH

Francis Merchant

A SCHOLAR came home from the market bearing a sackful of luscious red apples that diffused a pleasing aroma. Selecting one that looked particularly appetizing, he cut it in half and was about to bite into it when he noticed a worm wriggling at the core.

Surprised, the scholar put the apple on the table and exclaimed, "How did this obnoxious worm get into the core?"

"My forefathers always found food, shelter, and security in the same way I do," the worm replied. "According to our ancient records, a worm just like me was in the apple given to Adam when he was in the Garden of Eden."

"By what right do you gorge yourself on my apple?" the scholar protested.

"I have as much right to this apple as you," returned the worm. "What makes you and the human race in general think that you're superior to worms?"

"Well, it's very annoying to find a worm like you in the middle of a luscious apple. I almost lose my appetite watching you!"

"What neither you nor countless other human beings seem to realize," retorted the worm, "is that I'm a symbol of something. When you encounter me, something is supposed to dawn in your consciousness, but all you get out of the experience is a sense of being wronged."

"A symbol of what?" questioned the scholar. "I've read

many books, but I've never come upon such a problem."

"Your books aren't worth much, then," said the wurm bluntly. "Some of my kin who crawl about in the pages of library tomes have complained of indigestion, and I think I know why."

"Let me think," said the scholar. "You are the symbol of something disagreeable that is to be found in something desirable."

"That's not bad. You're beginning to reason with the clarity of a worm."

"That's about as far as I can get," confessed the scholar.

"Well, then," replied the worm, "I supppose I'll have to tell you. Most of the things that men eagerly grasp and prize have worms in them. All earthly pursuits are characterized in this way. Even the human body, on which people dote, is, in the end, simply food for worms."

"True," reflected the scholar, "but what do you advise us to do?"

"Find the wormless truth," said the wriggling creature as it disappeared into the core of the apple.

When anger is stirred up, the crystal depths are muddied.

A PRAYER IN DARKNESS

Frances Brandon Neighbours

Surrounded by darkness of night,
I walk slowly, Lord, seeing before me
Only one small circle of day.
Let no fear thoughts dim my sight;
Let me walk with tunnel vision
Toward Eternal Light.

THE SINGING IN THE SHELL

Emma S. McLaughlin

I HAD SAID GOODBYE to my guests of the afternoon, gathered the scattered crumbs dropped during the evening buffet and was passing the end table by the sofa when I noticed the square white envelope. Someone has forgotten something, was my thought as I picked it up and turned it over, but no, my name was clearly written on it together with a message: "To Emma, with love." It had been placed there quietly, unobtrusively, by one of the departing guests.

I was thinking how very generous and thoughtful the act as I drew from the envelope a small book. I opened it and was entranced. There, on the very first page, was a seascape, a stretch of beach, and upright in the sand like open wings were two shells left by an outgoing wave. The words above the picture suggested the thought that each day is like a shell, and if we hold it close enough, we should be able to hear all the music of life.

Slowly I turned the pages, reading the joyous verses that extolled life and the glories of the world around us. I marveled at the lovely display of clouds, forests, a lake that mirrored the sunset, a farm road deep in yellow dust, and a parade of gulls marching along the edge of the sea, sifting the waves for their evening meal. Always I returned to the first page and the upright shells.

Yes, I thought, the poet is right. Our days do come like treasures from the deep, fresh, clean, and shining, left on the shore of life after the wave of darkness recedes. Most of the time we are too busy to really appreciate how rare and beautiful they are. Seldom do we bother to hold them close enough to hear the singing—music that will too soon be lost in the rising tide of night.

The book in my hand, I sat down to recall the music of *this* day that now was hurrying to its close. If I had picked up the very first treasure found on my beach that morning, it would have been the swelling chorus of birdsong, for on this day I

was awake very early. Still abed, floating in that misty trough between semiconsciousness and consciousness, I tried to separate and identify the voices that were familiar to me. The robin seemed to sing loudest, and between the measures of his Sabbath song twined the sweet notes of the white-throat, song sparrow, and mockingbird, with now and again the "good cheer" of a cardinal punctuating the phrases. In a minor key underlying the melody, I was aware of the soft cooing of the mourning dove.

I had my coffee and a bowl of crisp cereal surrounded by this continuous medley of sound. The greatest musicians in the most magnificent cathedrals could not have given a better performance. Suddenly, as at the signal of some unseen director, the concert ended and all the choristers were off about the business of the day.

I dressed for church. The morning was cool and windy, gray with the promise of rain, but surely part of the music was the warm blood coursing through my body, the marvelous intricacy of hands that moved to clothe me and feet that were able to do my bidding, taking me wherever I wished to go.

The sanctuary of our church is built "in the round" to impress upon us that we are a family of believers gathered around our father's table. This construction makes it possible for those attending to see the faces of most of the congregation. Eyes met, smiles were exchanged, and heads nodded in friendly greeting. There was that music again. It swelled and grew louder as the service of worship drew to a close and it reached a crescendo in the halls and lounge where members lingered to chat with the minister and each other. This is a seemingly small gesture, but one that leaves a happy, glowing feeling, a sense of love given and returned, a sharing and a caring.

If I had taken the time to notice the music of every hour of the day, what wealth would have been mine: birds were busily bathing in a scattering of iridescent drops, grass sparkled green fire after an early rain, and a patch of white violets, blooming late, scattered fragrance abroad.

The cat purred contentedly on a rug in the kitchen as I prepared lunch, and then there was the joy of anticipating the arrival of our afternoon group, with the opportunity to see and

visit with members I had not seen for several weeks. They finally arrived, each bearing a covered dish to contribute to the picnic buffet that would follow the meeting.

Now could be heard a different music, notes of shared thought, laughter that welled up easily, and friends that came unbidden to the kitchen to help with the necessary chores. Now they were gone. A generous husband was busily washing silver and serving dishes, putting the kitchen back in its accustomed order. What a blessing he is to me. What a great help and comfort. Can I ever appreciate his worth as I should?

It was growing dark; I could barely make out the printed text of the book, so I pressed the switch on the table lamp. Light flooded the room, bringing a pattern of familiar shadows to the walls. Light. A gift we so often take for granted, but surely a part of the singing in the shell. I sat there for a time, taking a backward look at the treasures of my day and I found that they lined up along the edge of my thought as numerous as the gulls pictured at the water's edge.

I cherished one gift a bit more than the others. It seems when we gather shells, there is always one we prize. Perhaps it is whiter, more perfect in contour, palely translucent or pearlily opalescent. I held this one close, and it sang of thoughtfulness and friendship.

It was very dark outdoors now; the tide was coming in fast. I knew it would sweep away all the trivialities and petty annoyances from my beach, but it could never sweep away that which I had gathered and safely stored. I knew that when the darkness receded there would be another day, another white-winged shell spread open to the sun, with hours of joyous music just waiting for me to pause long enough to listen.

ALLIES

Nina Willis Walter

How thin the tinkle
of distant elephant bells,
yet the spirit hears.

THE JEWISH IDEA OF HOLINESS

Samuel M. Silver

WHAT IS the Jewish concept of "holiness"? The word is used very frequently. Like so many words from the religious lexicon it has even found its way into colloquialisms. To many people something that is holy is something that is separated from the phenomena of normal living. A holy object must be treated with special veneration. It must be kept in a particular place. It must be handled gingerly. It must be displayed on solemn occasions. It is somehow detached from our regular day-to-day experiences.

So it is with the High Holydays. They are a period apart from the rest of the year, in the opinion of many. They represent a peak in the year. We ascend and then descend. Durin g this season we deviate from our normal habitat, worshiping at length, and in general wrenching ourselves loose from our conventional regimen. This extraordinary posture of what we think is piety is in keeping with a popular conception of what holiness implies. It would be well, therefore, for us to discover, once and for all, that the idea of holiness outlined above is not a Jewish one. In Judaism holiness is not measured by the degree to which you remove yourself from life. It is determined by what you do in the very thick of your daily life. In Judaism sacred vessels are treated with respect, but not with awe. They are not obejcts invested with magical qualities, but they are mementoes of what you must do every day if you are to impart a touch of meaningfulness to your existence.

Jewish Torahs are well-worn and should be, for the Torah is not venerated as a mystical relic but is to serve as a guide for your course of activities every week. The Kiddush cup can be touched, handled, and fingered by all, for it has no other purpose but to remind you that, in the midst of commerical and domestic transactions, it is incumbent upon you to engender sweetness if you are to live up to God's expectations. The Shofar is a holy object in Judaism, not because it can produce some miracle but because it is a call to conscience, a call that you are supposed to heed not only in the synagogue but in the office, the neighborhood you live in, and the home. In short, in Juda-

ism holiness is not something apart from life but something which is a part of life. Judaism declares that holiness, which can be called the glow which comes from living in accordance with our higher capacities, is derived from the utilization of religious ideals and the constant symbols and rituals into the fabric of our normal actions and passions.

To illustrate the Jewish idea of holiness, let us take a few examples. Money would certainly not normally be regarded as a sacred item; it represents utter materialism and is a symbol of cupidity. But when you take some of your money and, denying something you might yearn for, donate it to a good cause, you have achieved an act of holiness. Indeed, then the money itself is transformed from something secular into something sacred. You have made it holy by the use you have put it to. You have performed a sacrifice. And if you will look up the origin of the word sacrifice you will discover that it means 'to make sacred.' Holiness, therefore, in Judaism is not a quality; it is a process. Objects and acts are not endowed with an independent quality known as holiness; they become holy by the nature of their usage.

The Pharisees, those badly maligned architects of the Jewish faith whom we designate as "the rabbis," have filled the Talmud with instances of how holiness can be achieved. They have told us that lust, canalized and elevated through a decent family life, can be transformed into love. They have told us that ambition, applied not only to the gratification of one's ego, can be —when raised to the point of being ambitious to serve others —lifted to the point of holiness. They have told us that the human quest of joy can be hallowed so that we can ultimately derive as much delight from giving as we instinctively derive from getting. They have told us that hatred, directed not at individuals but at evil, can be the source of much good. They have told us that virtually any mundane phenomenon can be sanctified or hallowed, that it is indeed the objective of religion to transmute the material into the moral, the homely into the holy. So, in our synagogues and our homes, let us with renewed insight understand what is expected of us if we are to live up to the criteria of holiness according to Judaism.

AS I ACCEPT

Ethel Peak

God gives to me abundantly,
My part is simply to align
Myself with Him and I can see
His storehouse opening up to me
And all I can accept is mine.

BENEATH THE BRIDAL-WREATH HEDGE

An Absurd Conversation by Eleanor Ebersole

THE TOADSTOOLS chatted in the filtered shade of the bridal-wreath hedge.

"Do you suppose they made a mistake?" whispered a small toadstool, one of the flat-topped group that had risen amid the wood chips that served as groundcover in the garden.

"Probably," replied a large toadstool.

"Maybe not," another said. "Maybe they are just too busy. It is a big park, you know."

"Costs money these days to tend to flowers, aside from what else comes up," a third one said.

"Certainly feels peaceful and warm here," murmured another. "The lawnmowers don't seem to travel between the bushes of the hedge."

"Well," said the small toadstool who had spoken first, "a pleasant afternoon deserves a sleep."

"Shall I keep watch. . . for the mistake?" asked one toadstool a bit farther removed from the others.

"Keep watch!" the large toadstool responded rather quickly. "For what? The lawnmowers?"

"No," replied the self-appointed watcher.

"For what, then?"

"For the end, of course."

"The end!" all the toadstools said in chorus. "What end?"

"The cutters come to the lawn and the bushes. Even the bridal-wreath hedge does not escape when it's time. There must be other cutters, too," the watcher explained.

"The mistake. That's what I'm looking for," the watcher went on emphatically. "The reason why we are here. . . ."

"The mistake!" the toadstools sounded in chorus again, though a few were beginning to tire of the whole conversation and to grow drowsy in the sun.

Hopelessly involved in a discussion that made little sense, some continued on and some went to sleep.

"I didn't ask the first question," the watcher said. "I'm not even trying to answer it. Looking is what I'm doing. Looking for the mistake."

"Hopeless!"

"Ridiculous!"

"Impossible!"

The afternoon wore on, becoming more silent as the lawnmowers traveled around.

"I have it!" shouted the watcher suddenly loud enough to startle all the toadstools as well as the bridal-wreath hedge.

"It wasn't a mistake. There are no cutters for such as us. No one has time for us, those who live in shadowed light. No one has us in their plan," the watcher concluded to its satisfaction.

"Sleep well, my friends," it said.

And the toadstools proceeded to do just that.

One has to slay the dragon of one's private sin, whether it be anger, pride, hate, lust, greed, or egotism—whatever separates us from the Other and the All.

AGE IS AN INDIVIDUAL MATTER

Carla Patsuris

THE ACCENT is on youth though not exactly on years. Many in their thirties or forties have ceased to be of worth to the world; they no longer live with enthusiasm and can hardly be called young in mind; and a youngish body with a vegetating mind is rather a clutter. Others, more mature, have come to know that life is a gift and that to lazy it away or to sleep it out is an insult to the Giver.

The wise mature men and women, regardless of years, have learned to love and use life and be grateful for it. They have developed a philosophy of believing they should waste no time on things that might have been, knowing they can go on only from where they are now.

Some realize the journey ahead is not for long and they strive to experience all the joys there are yet to be, and to share them. Others are fired with a drive to create through the arts or some great work as a gift to leave behind, if only to justify their birth into this big wonderful world.

Many other mature ones have become gentle and understanding and are dear as deep purple violets that are soft and sweet and hardy.

Chronological age is an individual thing. Two people of the same years may read a book, do a work, look upon a scene; one with but a superficial impression that may have made but a superifical dent, while the other may have seen what he or she was seeing with deep thoughts and rare results. Many of these more mature are so alive with radiance and energy that their accomplishments are myriad.

Through my work I meet those who have known a rebirth. One woman in her sixties had become unbeautiful and weary of living until something happened one day to mirror back her image to her own eyes. That hour a new interest was born and she chose to improve daily. Now, four years later, she actually looks fifteen years younger and has many interests besides a vocation and avocation, giving her no time in which to be ill.

It is exciting to call to mind a dozen or more of the 'reborn,' who have discovered that, regardless of birthdays, they can be young by being mentally and physically interested in meeting challenges. They do not ride to victory in rocking-chairs but live for the future by living now, keeping their memories alert to use as sharp tools that serve in making decisions and coming to conclusions.

I recall, too, several who once were unhappy, bored old folk, who are aiming at the century mark, each alert and active . . . activity being the answer.

SEEDS OF LIGHT
FOR YOUR MEDITATION

IF YOU WANT liberation, renounce all objects as poison; resort to mercy, straightforwardness, compassion, contentment and truthfulness as nectar.

You are neither earth nor water; neither fire nor air nor sky; for the purpose of liberation, know the self which is the witness of all these and which is pure consciousness.

If you separate the body and take your rest in consciousness, even just this moment you can become happy, peaceful and liberated from bondage;

Righteousness and unrighteousness, pleasure and pain, belong to the mind; they are not of you, O all-pervading One! You are not the doer nor the enjoyer; you are always in the liberated state.

You are the one seer of everything; you are always emancipated; your only bondage lies in that you are seeing the seer as a separate being.

You have been bitten by the great black serpent of the egoistic feeling "I am the doer;" counteract this poison by drinking the ambrosia of the faith "I am not the doer" and be happy.

Burn the forest of ignorance with the fire of the determination "I am the One Pure Consciousness;' thus be rid of grief and be happy.

A WALK IN MY GARDEN

Marion J. Richardson

A cool breeze
at eventide
blows through blossoms,
leaves, and grasses.
He lives
in all, calming
my mind with a
saturating
peace, under
infinite skies.

DESIRE

Elizabeth Twyeffort

Where love accumulates
its perfect fire,
It spills itself in flaming curves
of one's desire;

and where the azimuth of love
makes arc in time,
no time, but time itself explains
that love's divine.

I cannot allocate my will
to distant hours
as yet unspun. I cannot reach
that pinnacle
not come upon in heaven's arc
of blending hues.
I cannot set my future path
and see those views

that wait like prismed motes
in vibrant glass
that swings at whim of smallest breeze
like sunlit grass.
To know the outcome of a prayer
that sighs away
is thus to know what first was planned
for each someday.

FORGETTING TO WAIT

Winifred Hamrick Farrar

A weaving spider does better than I:
design being given,
he works. . .
spinning his filament
flinging his line
tying his corners
trusting;
while I burden my senses,
slashing both hands,
straining my eyes
my ears
touching tongue to fire
breathinghot ashes for air,
while my little committee
runs experiments,
forgetting to wait for the Guide,
forgetting to wait.

A TIME FOR THANKSGIVING

Jaye Giammarino

How colorful the market place
When season crops are in,

The ears of corn with yellow teeth,
Zucchini long and thin.

Asparagus with tufted heads
The eggplant's purple sheen,
And artichokes with tender hearts
As served in haute cuisine.

The bursting bins of honey-dew
And grapes of muscatel,
Vie with pears of golden hue
While peaches blush and sell.

The cornucopia overflows
With apples sweet and tart,
As orange pumpkins, reddish yams
Elate the human heart.

And all across this land of bliss
Thanksgiving is a time
To count the blessings from the hand
Of Him who is sublime.

COVERED WITH PRAYER

Blanche Landers

I often watched as Mother sewed
Small scraps of stripes and flowers
In quaint designs to form a square —
This work went on for hours.

The dainty bits of different shapes
She stitched with loving care;
With every stitch a whispered word
Became an endless prayer.

Though Mother's gone, she left her love
In treasured patchwork rare;
And always near in every stitch
She covers me with prayer.

THE REWARDS OF WRITING

Ann D. Franklin

HOW MARVELOUS it is to be able to set one's thoughts down on paper, to capture and recapture those large and small incidents that make up a life! How grand to be able to share an experience with someone, a total stranger perhaps who might have had a similar one.

Writing, no matter what form it takes, whether it be in prose, poetry, or in personal letters, affords a wholesome outlet for the outpouring of thoughts. And those thoughts, when put to paper, may in some ways affect someone's life by either uplifting or depressing him.

The writer who writes solely to uplift is to be commended. He will, however, have his adversaries, who will most likely label himself as an unrealistic dreamer, unwilling to see things as they are. Unmindful of criticisms, the writer will continue penning his positive thoughts. It is because of his acute awareness of the state of the world—the good and the bad of it—that he writes as he does. It is his intention to unburden the burdened mind for at least a brief period of time.

He accomplishes this in a number of ways. One, by recapturing something nostalgic from the past, which he might describe in the form of a novel or short story.

Again, through a poem, he might describe the simple beauties of nature, awakening the reader once more to the scene beyond his door.

And, lastly, he may in the form of an essay or letter, speak optimistically about the hopefulness of a better future.

Yes, writing can be a wholesome and delightful outlet for the expression of thoughts, especially when the writer writes with the intent of capturing and recapturing the positive aspects of life. And how refreshing it is to be able to share those experiences that spread warmth and light, providing a much-needed balance to the glaring grimness that predominates today.

REFUGE

Dolores Wyckoff

Where can I go when trials come
To find the peace I seek?
Who is there to give me rest
From my world so bleak?

I cry to the hills from whence I hear
The echo of my cry.
I search the plains in vain to find
A place where I might die.

Wash all the dark thoughts away, oh Lord,
With Thy breeze so cool and fresh.
Help me, oh Lord, to look to Thee
When I am in distress.

In the quiet of my own still heart
I found my rest at last.
'Tis God, alone, who lifts each care
That, in life, would bind us fast.

THEY SAID IT WAS TERMINAL

Gloria A. Martin

I VAGUELY HEARD the front door close behind my devoted maid, who quietly, at my firm insistence, left me to be alone with myself. I felt the urgent need to think. . . to meditate.

I am a "handicap." They said my illness was terminal, at the hospital where I spent the last several months, and sent me home to die. A malignancy, they called it. My physician had been making daily visits to my apartment, and this morning he gave it to me straight from the shoulder. My hours were numbered. I tried to blot out the memory.

The hall clock chimed. It was twelve noon. I pushed the thought of my unfinished dinner aside—strained baby food. The kind in those little glass jars with the picture of a baby on the front label.

Leaning back against plumped pillows, I attempted to make my mind a blank, closing my eyes to the familiar surroundings. Then a thought flashed through: Who was there to care? Just me, I guessed—I was all I had. A line from a poem came: "Where are you, true friend?" Where oh where. . . . It didn't pay to think.

That pain again. . . . I rode with it until it crescendoed, all the while trying to concentrate on a phrase—where had I read it?—"Nothing is real but God. And God is *all* there is." But the pain seemed real enough. . . . "God didn't make anything that wasn't good." That meant, in fact, that my illness was only an illness. It was but a *dis*-ease. Which meant, in turn, that my pain wasn't real! I rose above it—above the material sense of suffering. The pain was subsiding. I would not think of anything. The past was but a dream, and there were no tomorrows. Nothing could hurt me if I stayed in the Now. . . . "Nothing is real but God. . . ."

A hand on my forehead startled me.

"I let myself in—you were asleep." He set his bag aside.

I wanted to say something—I didn't know what---but he spoke again: "You look rested."

Suddenly it dawned on me. I felt different. I felt different! I felt. . . well! Well!

"God didn't make anything that wasn't good."

It was my voice. *My* voice. . . .

MEMO

Leta M. Edwards

Four things our faith would bid us do:
To live with grace,
To speak with grace,
To move with grace,
To wait with grace.
These four our spirits will renew.

THE SYMBOL OF THE LOTUS

Ruth Reyna

THERE IS a medieval hymn composed by an anonymous Hindu poet in which a devotee, asked by God to choose a reward for his good acts, makes an unusual request. "Oh Lord," he says, "I have no craving for fame or riches. I do not ask for a kingdom, nor do I seek great powers. If you are truly pleased with me, grant only this—that in my next life I should be born a flower."

To be reborn as a flower—to live among the quiet, cool leaves of a tender shrub in a placid pool, reaching upward to meet the warm, caressing rays of the life-giving sun in the blue, blue sky—to drop one's petals on the warm Mother Earth and to scatter color and scent throughout the world; and, at the end of life's brief span, to find one's place on the altar of the Divine, or in a maiden's hair, or in the loving hand of a friend—only an oriental mind could have thought of such a boon.

In India every flower is tinged with sanctity. Lowly wild flowers growing along the road are plucked as willingly to take to the temple as an offering as the more fastidious rose or kadamb. Indian ladies decorate their hair with honeysuckle blossoms, while it is not deemed unmanly for a man to offer another a flower to show his esteem and friendship. Pretentious garlands of sweet-scented flowers are made up and placed around the neck of an honored visitor.

But the best-loved and most sacred of the flowers in the East is the lotus or padma. The lotus rising from the depths of the primeval waters represents the self-engendering power of the evolutionary abyss. It is the principle or grandeur and sublimity and is both Being and Becoming. The shining lotus is an emanation from the world-womb of the Creator's cosmic sleep.

The Buddhist legend goes: Brahma, the highest creative being looking down upon Lord Buddha, the Awakened One, implored the Buddha to become the teacher of mankind, the teacher of gods, the teacher of the created world, all of which were enwrapped in the womb of sleep (ignorance). But there were some,

the god urged, who may be willing to awaken to the truth. As lotus flowers arising from the dark waters of a lake are to be found in various stages of maturity—some nearing the surface, some already open prepared to drink the rays of the sun—just so there might be among mankind a few prepared to hear.

Buddhist literature glorifies the lotus in many of its passages as symbolic of spirituality. The Dhammapada relates: "Like a beautiful flower full of color and full of scent are the well-spoken words of him who acts as he professes to;" and in other verses: "Just as on a heap of rubbish thrown upon the highway grows the lotus sweetly fragrant and delighting the heart. . ." or "Even so among those blinded mortals who are like rubbish, the truly enlightened shines with exceeding glory by his wisdom."

From the purely personal end, the Vedic sage finds the supreme spirit as the soul of our soul within the body, which he speaks of as a "nine-petalled (portalled) lotus": "There is the nine-portalled lotus covered under three bands, in which lives the Spirit with the Atman within that the Veda-knowers know." This passage symbolizes the body and signifies its purity and beauty—the "nine-portalled lotus" is the beautiful body with its nine apertures.

The enraptured person, unmindful, unperturbed by the exigencies of the world around him, he who sits in concentration without being distracted by the activities and cravings of the earthly life, is likened in Hindu thought to the lotus leaf that remains unstained by water. It is a classic simile that, just as the leaves of the lotus, which because of their smooth, oily surface are not affected by the water in which they grow and remain, so likewise the man established in the Universal Self, the Spirit of God, the waves of the world in which he dwells do not destroy him.

In spite of internal dissension, we human beings are led slowly, slowly ever toward the light. Plants grow toward the light. . . and so do people, although this light may be invisible. The process is spiritual evolution.

THE CHRISTIANS

C. Thurston Bowden

AS IT WAS. . . .

All eyes looked upward at the sound of the heavy bolt being withdrawn. The hope of freedom had diminished, increasing the need for food and water. Water would mean so much to the restless children and the elderly and sick.

The bracketed torches in the corridor cast a dim light into the subterranean stone chamber as the body tumbled down the steps. The door closed, to the sound of the iron bolt repeated.

A bearded patriarch who had plodded miles spreading the teachings of Christ was the first to reach the new arrival. "Keep the children back," he cautioned. "Put out some straw to make a pallett."

The man lay as he had fallen, hands and feet mangled from torture. His voice was slow.

"The Romans," he said, "planned to destroy Christianity for all time in a manner which will never be forgotten."

"That is why we are here in the animal pits under the Coliseum?" the patriarch asked.

"Yes, we are to be used in the games in place of the animals. I have been tortured for hours to reveal the names of other Christians. Thank God, I did not know the names of any that were not already taken. I might have weakened under the pain and betrayed them."

"Some have escaped?" the patriarch asked.

"Many heeded the warning signals and fled to the hills. The glorious word of His teaching has spread beyond Rome." He turned his head, hands groping to touch the older man, unseeing from ravaged eye sockets, his voice rising in a strained firmness: "Christianity shall not die here, but here we shall die for Christianity!" He clung to the other's hands. "Did they not have games here last night?"

"Yes," the patriarch said. "The barred window is high. It is necessary to stand on the shoulders of others to see. I watched only a brief time. It was gladiators in armed combat."

"How was the arena lighted?"

"A line of tall poles with torches affixed," said the patriarch.

"The torches were Christians—my group! We were taken several days before you. As the leader, I was questioned. The others were tied to the poles, doused with oil, and burned alive!"

"God have mercy!" The patriarch bowed his head before adding, "They are with Him now. Do you know what is planned for us?"

The man lay back exhausted. "Yes," he said faintly, "the lions!"

They sat in a circle. The patriarch spoke of the Master and His teachings. He told of the promise of life beyond the mortal flesh.

"If we believe, we shall receive. If we are to be tested, that is when our faith must be the strongest. Did he not say, 'Come unto me, ye who are weary'? Let us now ask Him in prayer to help us in this our time of need. Our faith must not weaken but will strengthen us to get beyond this world of sin and suffering.'

They prayed and settled themselves to waiting. The children drew crosses on the grime-covered walls.

The door clashed open. The Roman guards entered the chamber. "Move! Move! You are next!"

The patriarch spoke. "Help each other," he said. "Join hands."

"Move! The Emperor is waiting!"

"Haha! So are the lions!"

Whips lashed at the stragglers.

"Sing, my children!" The patriarch's voice echoed from the stone walls. "Praise Him in song!"

They climbed the steps, their song accompanied by roars from the neighboring pits.

AS IT WILL BE . . . .

They came with the darkness. Some alone, others in pairs or small groups. A blanket-wrapped infant nestled in a mother's

arms. Toddlers gripped extended fingers. The strong aided the weak, pushing wheelchairs, guiding those on crutches. They came in silence, strong in intent, united in purpose.

"Welcome, brothers and sisters! We came like a thief in the night, as our Saviour will come. Soon he will come, as is recorded in the prophesy. Tonight we must find strength in his words, in his love, and in each other. Our houses of worship banned, forbidden to gather in our homes, we must praise him here." His outstretched arms a moving blue in the dimness, "A playing field. The stadium of our school, where our children learn fair play and physical endurance. We come here not in shame but in glory to praise him and to pray for guidance in these times of duress. As was warned, the tribulation is upon us and we must have the endurance the players needed to claim victory on this field. Not physical endurance, but spiritual endurance. Our victory will be—"

A sound! A chain being released of tension!

". . . our victory will be. . ."

The sound repeated at the opposite side of the field.

". . . victory will be a place in His Kingdom!"

The car headlights cleaved the darkness, silhouetting the figures against the lower bleachers.

The leader halted the near-panic. His calm voice drowned the startled questions and gasps of fear.

"Don't run! Stay together. Quiet the children!"

From the rear gate more headlights skimmed the evenly-cropped grass, forming a crossbeam to box in the trapped congregation.

"Pray, my children! Kneel and ask in his name—"

"Lock the gates!" A boisterous voice from the darkness. "Don't let them get away!"

Several other cars had eased in through the gates, adding lights to the illumination of the kneeling figures. More voices shouted orders.

"Some of you get up in the stands!"

"Surround them so they can't get away that way!"

The droning intonation of the prayers continued. The leader's voice an octave above his flock in order to carry the cadence.

"He gives me new strength.

He guides me in the right way.
As he has promised even if that way
Goes through the deepest darkness.
I will not be afraid, Lord,
Because you are with me!"

Laughter and jeers from the stands above. The tinkle of glass and the lighting of cigarets.

"What on earth are they doing?"

"Who's got the damned bottle?"

"Praying? Oh! Haha! How old-fashioned can you get? That's a good one!"

"They're talking to God!"

"Baby, come sit by me, this is too good to miss!"

"Get off your knees, you idiots!"

A bottle thudded near the heels of the leader, another grazed the shoulder of a woman. She dropped forward on her hands before turning terrified eyes to the stands. The leader helped her to her feet. Stepping toward the stands, hands raised in asking silence, he said, "We came here in peace that our actions would offend no one. We love all men as brothers and accept you as friends."

"Listen to that crap!"

"It's against the law to meet in secret and practice any religion!"

"Somebody get a truck and we'll arrest them!"

"Let's beat them up first!"

"Arrest them! Citizens' arrest!"

"Beat them!"

"The police don't care. They're resisting arrest!"

A young man with knowledge of a weak place in the fence (a knowledge gained from football practice) reached for his girl's hand. Stealthily they slipped out of the congregation into the darkness.

"Hey! Get those two!"

"Get them! Don't let anybody get away!"

"I'll stop them!" A voice from behind headlights.

A revved engine shattered the night as the headlights became alive, searching, probing the fenceline. The young couple

froze together as the lights targeted them. The boy pushed the girl beyond the glare and ran.

The lights followed him. The grinding of gears and a horn-blast pulled all eyes to the race's end. The boy's broken body spun and collapsed in a motionless bundle.

The car shifted into reverse, sliding in a turn to focus the lights on the running girl. She had lost a shoe. Her legs and arms reached hopelessly for distance. The car hit her from the back, her blue dress a flash of motion before she passed over the car to the darkness beyond.

"Hey, I got two!" the voice proclaimed.

"I want to get one!"

"See if you can make one run!"

"It's kill-a-Christian time!"

"Kill 'em!"

"Kill them!"

"Turn on the lights so we can run 'em down!"

The overhead lights bathed the field in imitation-daylight.

The cars revved and lapped the field, seeking prey, each wishing to claim a victim. Some paced the running figures to prolong the excitement. Horns honked. Cars skidded and maneuvered to assure a kill or avoid a meeting of steel. Some of the watchers sat close to enjoy the slaughter.

The game slowed. The leader, losing control of his flock, faced death with eyes and voice raised to heaven. When his broken legs prevented him from standing, he prayed through shattered teeth. Two cars side by side ended his suffering.

The victors stood beside their death chariots.

"Man, I got four!"

"One was a kid—they don't count!"

"Oh, it was super!" A feminine voice.

"Let's go!"

They raced to the gate, then into the city. They would rest before searching for some diversion for the next night.

A bird's song announced daylight.

A paperboy noticed the stadium lights and was surprised.

A dog on its morning walk acted strange, sniffing the air.

A slight breeze whiffed across the stadium. All else was

motionless.

". . . . and I saw thrones, and they sat upon them: and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God. . . ."

MY OLD HOME CHURCH

Elma Scheel Bearss

Sweet memories of olden days
Come flooding back to me;
Of that small church so peaceful-like,
The folks I used to see.

I seem to hear the church bells ringing
Across the years today,
Also the hymns we always sang,
The prayers we used to say.

While kneeling at the altar there,
God seemed so very near.
He granted peace to weary hearts
And dried each falling tear.

Our loved ones of those long-gone days
Lie peacefully at rest,
Close by the church they loved, beneath
The quiet country's breast.

. . . Dear memories probe deep today
Into those cherished years.
With love — I hold them tenderly —
While smiling through my tears.

ABUNDANCE

Francis O. Raniville

God gives
abundantly
to humble hearts who seek
and live this life victoriously
by faith.

MY MANY FRIENDS

Albert Jacobsen

Now, at the sunset of my life,
In addition to close friends and relatives,
I have many friends in unusual places,
Where they are not at first obvious—
Friends of the printed page,
Many kindred spirits,
In books without number,
In garden and horticultural magazines,
In certain newspaper articles;
Some editors and writers in periodicals,
Especially poetry and religious magazines;
And also spiritual friends,
Who live in the Holy Bible.
All God's beneficial creatures,
And myriads of trees and plants,
The beautiful and the useful,
All are my silent friends;
Not forgetting, out of the past,
Many people, young and old,
Who live only in my memory,
Who have passed on,
Or who have passed out of my life;
And finally, above all,
Our Lord, and God, the Creator.

GRATIFICATION

IN his New Collegiate Dictionary Webster defines the word *gratification* as: "A source of satisfaction."

Keeping this definition in mind, I am sure the American statesman and orator would never have dreamed of my using his definition to show my appreciation of the response of the membership to the Spirit of '76 Book For Eternity Program.

I would like to share several comments received about the Bicentennial Roll of Honor certificates:

"What a handsome meaningful certificate came to me yesterday. I hasten to thank you for it and to assure you and all our friends at FIP that it will be treasured. . . ." L.K.S.

"Please list me in the I AM AN AMERICAN category. . . . . It is time to remember that our beloved country was founded by men of high principles, with faith and hope in God. . . ." D.E.S.

"The certificate. . . an honor to have. Certainly an interesting memo to have of our Bicentennial year! It is beautiful! God's blessing and guidance for you and yours!" G.L.P.

Gratification is indeed "a source of satisfaction." —R.L.M.

TODAY AND TOMORROW

Margaret Giles

God isn't dead
For I talked to Him this morning
While resting beside a sparkling river
Watching the blackbirds soaring.

Thinking of the stream's steady flow
Through the yesteryears and each coming tomorrow
Reminded me of God's steadying presence in my life
That I may end up in eternal happiness, not sorrow.

EXPIRATIONS. With another increase in postage rates in July, the Fellowship can no longer send the bimonthly publication beyond the expiration date. Therefore, if your subscription has expired and you have not sent in your renewal, you will *not* receive the next issue. We are sorry about this, especially since we think the December issue will be an unusually good one!

AN EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE. Kathryn G. Brown, our Executive Secretary, is grateful to all friends who sent gifts to Fellowship in Prayer in memory of her dear mother who passed away on July 21; also for the numerous cards and letters she received from FIP members. All of these expressions have meant a great deal to her, and will be recorded in the "Family Memory Book."

To be filled with grace, first be empty as a cup.

ALL HEAVEN KNOWS OF ME

Donna Jean Kirkpatrick

I'll probably never achieve great wealth
Or acquire world-wide fame.
Most people won't know where I've lived
Or recognize my name.

But I've achieved a greater fame,
In time you will see.
Because my name's written in the book
And all Heaven knows of me.

BENNIE CAROLINE HALL

(November 23, 1887 - July 1, 1976)

Mrs. Bennie Caroline Humble Hall, a retired editor and writer, who had been a member of FIP since 1953 and Advisor from the Southern Zone since 1958, passed away in McKenzie, Tenn., on July 1. The author of more than one hundred books, Mrs Hall also collected material for and edited *The Spiritual Diary*, an inspirational guide containing little sermons, short prayers, and quotations from the Bible for each day of the year. President Eisenhower and the late J. Edgar Hoover contributed to it. It gained usage by ministers as a source for ideas for sermons, was used as a textbook in a number of divinity schools, and was serialized page by page by the Scripps-Howard newspapers. The money from the serialization Mrs Hall donated to whatever use was preferred by ministers who had contributed to the book. They voted to use the money for religious radio work, and it did pay for a year's broadcast of Sunday morning sermons. Mrs Hall, who was eighty-eight years old, is survived by one son and four grandchildren. She will be deeply missed by the Fellowship.

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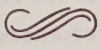

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FILLERS in this issue—on pages 8, 15, 25 and 34—were contributed by Virginia Ladd Otis.

A QUAINT LITTLE CHURCH

Ann D. Franklin

There's a quaint little church
Not far from here
That retains all its charm
Of yesteryear.

Standing amid
Suburbia's sprawl,
It's a guidance of light
For one and all.

Undaunted by time
And its rapid pace,
This small wooden church
Is a pillar of grace.

And whenever you hear
Its steeple bells chime,
You are totally aware
Of something divine